



Making Excellence Inclusive

Making Excellence Inclusive is AAC&U's guiding principle for access, student success, and high-quality learning. It is designed to help colleges and universities integrate diversity, equity, and educational quality efforts into their missions and institutional operations. Through the vision and practice of inclusive excellence, AAC&U calls for higher education to address diversity, inclusion, and equity as critical to the wellbeing of democratic culture. Making excellence inclusive is thus an active process through which colleges and universities achieve excellence in learning, teaching, student development, institutional functioning, and engagement in local and global communities.

A high-quality, practical liberal education should be the standard of excellence for all students. The action of making excellence inclusive requires that we uncover inequities in student success, identify effective educational practices, and build such practices organically for sustained institutional change.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity: Core Principles

AAC&U endeavors to develop "equity-minded practitioners," who are willing to engage in the necessary, and sometimes difficult, conversations and decision-making that can lead to transformational change for student learning and achievement.

Diversity: Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Equity: The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.

Equity-mindedness: A demonstrated awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders and staff (Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California).

Inclusive Excellence in Practice

"[Inclusive excellence] is much more than a principle. It is a process. We've defined the term in multiple ways in our work here at the UW System and with our institutions: IE is an iterative and strategic campus planning process; it is an institutional philosophy; it is an end goal and outcome; and finally, it is an emerging approach to diversity that is both top down and bottom up."

Christine Navia, Senior Institutional Planner, Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Wisconsin System